



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Secretary of State Bruce McPherson and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa Welcome New United States Citizens at Naturalization Ceremony

LOS ANGELES, CA - Secretary of State Bruce McPherson today joined Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in welcoming the newly sworn-in United States citizens at the INS Naturalization Ceremony held at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Secretary McPherson attended the ceremony in which approximately 3,500 new citizens were sworn in, and spoke to them about their newly obtained right to register and vote in California's elections.

As part of "Voter Education and Participation Month", Secretary McPherson and Mayor Villaraigosa helped new citizens register to vote and educated them on the new HAVA and state mandated registration requirements. Secretary McPherson discussed his goals of increasing the number of registered voters in the State of California and urged all citizens to register to vote and to participate in the upcoming June Primary Election.

"I congratulate those who became new citizens today, and I thank Secretary McPherson for his leadership in encouraging all of our citizens - regardless of background or heritage - to register to vote and to become active participants in our democratic process," said Mayor Villaraigosa. "In that spirit, I encourage each and every one of the new citizens today to make their voice heard --- and register to vote."

"I am pleased to congratulate California's newest citizens and to speak with them about registering to vote and participating in the process. I hope that every one of these new Americans will register to vote and will take advantage of their right to vote," said Secretary McPherson.

Secretary McPherson declared April Voter Education and Participation month and will be working towards educating Californians about the new laws. Citizens can register to vote until the 15-day close of registration, which is May 22nd. For more information, please visit the Secretary of State's website at www.ss.ca.gov.

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WHAT'S NEW FOR THE 2006 ELECTIONS
New federal laws will have an impact on this year's elections.
Learn how they will impact you and Your Vote.

New Identification Requirements:

- To register or re-register to vote after January 1, 2006, you **must** provide a California driver's license or state ID number, if you have one, in the fields provided on the voter registration form. If you don't have either of these, you must provide the last four numbers of your social security number in the field provided.
- The elections official must verify your ID number before putting you on the list of registered voters, so be sure to register well in advance of the election.
- Some people who registered by mail for the first time in California and did not fill in their ID number may have to show ID when they vote at a polling place, or include a photocopy of their ID with their absentee ballot. Contact your local elections officials if you have questions. Find your elections official by calling 1-800-345-VOTE or by visiting: http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm

Voting Equipment Must Be Accessible to Voters with Disabilities:

- New federal law requires that beginning in 2006, each polling place must have at least one voting machine available to voters with disabilities.
- Voters with disabilities should be able to vote privately and independently.

Your County May Have New Voting Equipment:

- Many counties have purchased new voting systems to meet federal and state laws. If you are not familiar with how to cast a ballot on this system, ask the precinct worker to show you how the system works.
- All voting systems in California must pass strict tests and meet all federal and state standards before being approved for use.

You Have the Right to Cast a Ballot:

- If you are not on the list at your polling place, you have the right to cast a "provisional" ballot. The poll worker will give you information about how to find out if your vote was counted, and if it was not, why not.
- A "provisional" ballot is just like a regular ballot, except it goes into an envelope or pending status until the election official can determine your eligibility. The ballot will be counted if the election official can determine your eligibility.
- If you are in the wrong polling place, the poll worker may try to help you by giving you directions to the right polling place, where your name should be on the list and you could vote a regular ballot. If you choose not to go there, you can vote a provisional ballot.